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## **Network Publishing with Royalty: Powers of the Xanadu\* Publishing Method**

\*Note: "Xanadu" is a trademark of the Xanadu World Publishing Repository. ©1993 Xanadu WPR.

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### **The Problem.**

Everyone wants to know: how do we handle copyright and the sale of documents on computer networks? Emotions run high on this issue.

The obvious issue is this: Who is responsible for the contents?

The lurking issue is this: How can people make reasonable use of materials in new ways and new contexts?

Some say that electronic documents create a new grey area to which traditional publishing law does not apply. Some say all information should be free. Some say no information should be free.

We begin by assuming that we must operate in a world of existing law, and see if we cannot get what we want by that means.

We believe we can get more-- both in general benefit to all and in potential profits to participants-- through the extension of traditional publishing methods.

In the Xanadu method, we take traditional publishing and fly it to the moon.

### **Laws and traditions of publishing**

There is a body of law on the subject of publishing. In traditional law, the process of publishing is *making something public*, usually

a paper document. The **publisher** is someone who claims to hold the rights in the object, is held accountable for its contents, and reaps the profits from its sale. **Printers and distributors** are those support businesses which aid in the publishing process; they are normally not responsible for the contents of the document.

**1. Recognition of traditional publishing roles.**

In Xanadu publishing there is a *publisher*, who claims to own the rights.

The publisher decides the royalty, which is the fee per byte for the digital object. This is the amount the publisher will get every time the material is sold. But it better be very small or nobody will buy. The publisher makes a deal with the *service provider*, a firm or individual operating with these methods, who corresponds to the printer and distributor of the paper world.

**2. Official publication.**

The publisher places the document with the service provider and signs a paper to solemnize publicly the event of publication and publicly assume responsibility for the contents.

**3. Delivery of any portions, with royalty on every byte.**

The service provider then supplies any requested portion to any customer. Transmission is by any convenient means. Money is collected by any convenient means. The service provider may charge any amount for the delivery, provided that the stated royalty is returned to the publisher each time a byte is sent to any customer.

**4. QUOTATION BY POINTER (transclusion and transpublication).**

Anybody may freely, without any arrangement, quote anything else published by this method. The quoted material is virtually included in the new document or object, and bought by the user from the original publisher at the instant of delivery.

The quotation does not have to be embedded or referred to in the text; the links and connections are supported by the software.

The quoted material remains in the space of the original publisher, however. This means that *the quoted material is bought from the original publisher at the time of request*. We call this

*transpublication*, the virtual republication of something owned by another publisher. (Virtual inclusion across a document boundary, with or without publication, we call *transclusion*.)

## **5. OPEN METAMEDIA PUBLISHING, A NEW WORLD**

This means that anybody can quote or link to anything, and a great web of interconnected hypertext and hypermedia may be created. The links are created by individuals, not by the system, and every link and transclusion is part of a specific document.

We see this as creating a completely new interconnected information environment: *Metamedia*: new constructs from old materials.

It is not "pure information," for there is no such thing, but rather supports a grand pluralism of ideas and viewpoints.

## **6. Technical and contractual support.**

The roles and relationships embodied here are both embodied in the software and acknowledged in the contracts.

## **7. Freedom from record-keeping.**

Freedom of the press means that anyone can publish and anyone may read, in private. We support that privacy and keep no records of who needs what, or else *reading becomes a political act*.

## **Where it stands**

The Xanadu publishing method was proposed decades ago.

Though it is simple to state, the technical implications are profound, and implementation has been difficult. We intend to begin service shortly.

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